

SMOOT, Abraham Owen, president of the Utah Stake of Zion from 1868 to 1895, was born Feb. 17, 1815, in Owen county, Kentucky. His father, George W. Smoot, was from Prince Edward county, Virginia, and his mother, Ann Rowlett, was from the same State and county. They migrated from Virginia to Kentucky in 1812. On the father's side he was of Scotch origin. Grandfather Smoot emigrated from Scotland and settled on the eastern shores of Maryland. His wife, Nancy Beal, was from England. They emigrated about the same time and were married in America. When Abraham O. Smoot was seven years old, his parents moved from his native place to the western district of Kentucky, and when he was about thirteen years old, to a short distance across the State line into Tennessee, where he lived till he embraced the gospel and came west. His father belonged to no church, nor did his mother until she joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His father died in 1828, before the Church was founded; his mother came into the Church in 1835; he himself was baptized March 22, 1835, by Elder Warren Parrish. Soon after joining the Church Abraham O. Smoot was ordained a Deacon and given charge of a small branch which had been built up by Apostle David W. Patten and Elders Wilford Woodruff and Warren Parrish. He served in the capacity of a Deacon from May, 1835, to Feb. 4, 1836, when he was ordained an Elder by Wilford Woodruff, with whom he traveled in the ministry for about a year, mostly in the States of Tennessee and Kentucky. In the fall of 1836 he went to Kirtland, Ohio, with Elder Woodruff, where the body of the Church first gathered. Here they spent the ensuing winter together, attending the Kirtland high school. In the spring of the year 1837 the Prophet Joseph advised Elder Smoot to return to

Vol 1:485-7

Kentucky, as the northern climate did not agree with his health. He returned to his native State, but soon afterwards he and Elder Henry G. Sherwood organized a company of Saints and led them to Far West, Caldwell county, Missouri, at which place the Saints had located, after having been driven from Jackson county. Having, with Elder Sherwood, led the company to the then headquarters of the Church, Elder Smoot continued traveling in the ministry, preaching until the latter part of 1838, when the Saints were driven from Missouri. He was at Far West as one of its active defenders when that "Mormon" city fell before the combined forces of the militia and mob of the State under the



command of General John Clark, whose speech to the prisoners of war, after the Prophet, his brother Hyrum, Parley P. Pratt, and others of the leaders had given themselves up, stands as one of the most barbaric speeches that ever fell from the lips of any officer in modern times, civil or military. Abraham O. Smoot was one of those prisoners of war. While a prisoner he married his first wife, Martha T. McMeans. They were married Nov. 11, 1838. In the month of February, 1839, they left Missouri in the general expulsion of the Saints from that State. Their outfit was very scant, consisting of a small wagon and a span of horses; yet they took with them the family of John L. Butler (afterwards Bishop of Spanish Fork) with his wife and five children.

They made their way into Illinois as best they could, through the storms of winter, and arrived at Quincy on the 8th of March. Here they spent the spring months and recruited, and early in the summer moved to Nauvoo. After meeting his wife in Nauvoo, Elder Smoot again took missions in the ministry. He traveled in the Southern States and introduced the gospel in Charleston, South Carolina. His last mission after the martyrdom of the Prophet was to gather up the Saints of the Southern States for the journey to the mountains. In the exodus he led a company to Winter Quarters and was the captain of one of the pioneer companies in the journey to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. His company, which was organized at the rendezvous on Elkhorn river, consisted of 120 wagons. It was the largest company on the road that season, and was the second company that arrived in the valley after the pioneers—Daniel Spencer's being the first. Elder Smoot was elected a member of the first High Council in the organization of the Great Salt Lake Stake, which existed several years before the incorporation of the city. He was the first justice of the peace that ever acted in Utah. The next year was the great gold emigration to California, when, as the only justice of the peace found between the Missouri river and Salt Lake, he was called upon by the gold-seekers to adjudicate in about forty cases, some of which involved thousands of dollars. In the fall of 1849 he returned east to establish a carrying company with Jedediah M. Grant, on the Missouri river, twelve miles from Winter Quarters, which, however, was not accomplished, but they established a ferry there and started the largest portion of the emigration of that year. In the spring of 1850 he engaged to bring out two trains of merchandise, one for Colonel John Reese, and conducted one for Livingston & Kinkade—the former by his partner, Jedediah M. Grant, the latter conducted by himself. These were the earliest of the merchant trains that supplied the Salt Lake City market after the one brought by Livingston & Kinkade the previous year. In the fall of 1851 Elder Smoot was called to go on a mission to England. In company with Elders Willard Snow and Samuel W. Richards, he arrived in

Liverpool New Year's day 1852. When they left Salt Lake City there had been seven months, and Pres. Brigham Young was anxious for information of the work in Europe; so they traveled with all speed and made the quickest trip from the Valley to England up to that time. At the next season's emigration, the important question was considered by the presidency of the British mission as to who should be chosen to take charge of the emigration, and more than the usual solicitude was manifested in consequence of this being the first sent under the operations of the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company. Among all the Elders then in Europe, Abraham O. Smoot was chosen, and it is well known in the history of the "Mormon" emigrations from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake valley that the companies of that year were well conducted and cared for on the journey. In charge of the emigration, he arrived in Great Salt Lake City about the middle of September, but was immediately sent back to meet the sugar works on the plains, which he met between Green river and the South Pass on the Sandies and brought them in. In the spring of 1856 he went to St. Louis, Mo., to purchase goods and supplies for the Church, expecting remittances of the money from the Liverpool office, which, however, had been drained by the large emigration of the poor that season; so that Abraham O. Smoot had to be personally responsible for the purchases until the money could be brought round; but he succeeded and brought home 40 wagons and 120 yoke of cattle. After the death of Jedediah M. Grant, the first mayor of Salt Lake City, Abraham O. Smoot, in November, 1856, was elected by the city council to take his place, and in February, 1857, he was re-elected mayor of Salt Lake City, by the unanimous vote of the people at their regular election. He went to the States in charge of the mail carried by the Y. X. Company, and brought the news of the coming of the Utah expedition. He remained in charge of the city during the Utah war, moved with the people south and located for the time at Salem, where there was feed for his stock. After the conclusion of peace he returned with the people to Salt Lake City and resumed his duties as its chief magis-

trate. He was re-elected mayor in February, 1859, and was by repeated elections continued in office till February, 1866. He was also alderman of the Fifth Municipal Ward, four years before being elected mayor. In February, 1868, he was called to Provo, to take charge of the Utah Stake, and was elected mayor of Provo on the second Monday in February. He served Provo as mayor for twelve years without pay, as he also served Salt Lake City for ten years without salary. He was a member of all the constitutional conventions except those of 1887 and 1895, and an officer of the provisional government of the State of Deseret. He also served twelve years in the council branch of the legislature. His financial record was a most successful one. He was one of the conspicuous promoters of the Provo Woolen Mills and for many years president of that company; at the time of his death he was one of its principal stockholders. He was one of the organizers of the First National Bank of Provo, and at the time of his death the president, which position he held continuously from the organization of the bank. He was one of the organizers and principal stockholders of the Utah County Savings bank, and president of it from the day of its opening until he died. He became largely interested in the Provo Co-operative Institution soon after its incorporation, and at the time of his death owned nearly half of the capital stock. He was president continuously from 1867 to 1895. He was identified more extensively than any other man with Provo's financial and industrial institutions. In educational matters he was a great leader. When Pres. Brigham Young established the academy that bears his name, Abraham O. Smoot was chosen as the president of the board of trustees, and that position he held until his death. The school monopolized much of his time and financial influence. After a most eventful and successful career, President Smoot died at Provo, March 5, 1895. About three weeks before his demise he had a family gathering, when his children assembled to celebrate his eightieth birthday. His words to them on that occasion were full of good counsel and wisdom. (See also "Tul-lidge's Quarterly Magazine," Vol. 3, p. 297.)